

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 EB-11 OMB-01 CU-04

CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4922

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION *ATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16147

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

USIA PASS IEE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: MORE ON POSSIBLE SOVI*T CONCESSIONS ON CSCE

BASKET THREE

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REF: A. MOSC W 15881

* B.*MOSCOW 16072 (*NOTA)

1. SUM*ARY. RECENT CPSU CE*TRA* COMMITTEE B*IEFING FOR SOVIET FOREIGN CORRESPONDEN S AND OTHER SOVIETS SERVING ABROAD LENDS FURTHER WEIGHT TO REPORTS THAT USSR HAS DECIDED TO MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS TO WEST IN INFORMATION FIELD. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA DECEMBER 28 REPORTS DECEMBER 24-26 MEETING IN CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF SOVIET FOREIGN ENTERPRISES WITH CC DEPARTMENT AND SECTION HEADS. PARTICIPANTS DESCUSSED PROPAGANDIZING OF PEACE PROGRAM AND ELUCIDATION OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY. "BRIEFERS" INCLUDED CC SECRETARIES DEMICHEV, PONOMAREV, AND KATUSHEV, AS WELL AS CC DEPARTMENT CHIEFS ABRASSIMOV (FOREIGN CADRE) AND SHAURO (CULTURAL).

3. WHILE SUCH PERIODIC MEETINGS ARE NOT IN THEMSELVES UNUSUAL, AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT TELLS US HE HAS HEARD FROM SOVIET JOURNALIST SOURCE THAT INTER ALIA FOLLOWING POINTS WERE MADE AT THIS MEETING: (1) THERE SHOULD BE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN PLAY OF FOREIGN NEWS IN SOVIET PRESS AND (2) THERE WILL BE MORE OPEN CIRCU- LATION OF WESTERN PRESS IN SOVIET UNION. ON LATTER POINT, SOURCE SAID WESTERN PAPERS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN SIDEWALK KIOSKS (NOT JUST HO*ELS) AND MENTIONED INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE AND LE MONDE SPECIFICALLY, BUT HE GAVE NO INDICATION OF HOW MANY COPIES WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. SOURCE SAID SOME SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS BASED IN U.S. MAY HAVE ATTENDED MEETING.

4. COMMENT. THIS REPORT IS CONSISTENT WITH INFORMATION PASSED TO US RECENTLY (REFTELS) INDICATING A MORE PERMISSIVE SOVIET POLICY ON INFORMATION ISSUE. EVIDENCE IS ACCUMULATING THAT THERE HAS INDEED BEEN A SOVIET DECISION TO EASE SOME OF THE RESTRICTIONS RELEVANT TO CSCE BASKET THREE. THE PARTICIPATION IN THE DECEMBER 24-26 BRIEFING OF THREE OF THE FOUR CPSU SECRETARIES WHO ATTENDED THE IDEOLOGICAL MEETING OF COMMUNIST COUNTRY PARTY SECRETARIES DECEMBER 18-19
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SUGGESTS THAT DECISION MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN EARLIER THIS MONTH BY SOVIETS AND RATIFIED BY NULTILATERAL IDEOLOGICAL MEETING, AND IS NOW BEING PASSED TO SOVIET PARTY WORKERS AND JOURNALISTS ABROAD. IF THIS SCENARIO IS ACCURATE, WE WOULD EXPECT SPECIFIC CHANGES IN INFORMATION FIELD TO SURFACE QUITE SOON, SO THAT SOVIETS CAN RETURN TO CSCE IN MID-JANUARY WITH FAITS ACCOMPLIS WHICH THEY CAN THEN

SELL AS IMPORTANT CONCESSIONS ON BASKET THREE (AS THEY DID WITH UNJ*MMING OF VOA, BBC, *ND DEUTSCHE WELLE). PENDING ANY SUCH PROGRESS ON INFORMATION/CONTACTS FRONT, WE WOULD CAUTION AGAINST ANY PRE-MATURE WESTERN EUPHORIA UNTIL WE SEE THE COLOR OF THE CONCESSIONS. LEAKINESS OF RECENT REPORTED DECISION MAY INDICATE THAT SOVIETS ARE CONCENTRATING MORE ON ITS POSITIVE PROPAGANDA EFFECT IN WEST THAN ON THE ACTUAL CONCESSIONS IT MAY HOLD IN STORE. AND IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT, DURING CALL BY ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DECEMBER 27 ON MFA FIRST EUROPEAN DIVISION CHIEF DUBININ (WHO HAS*HANDLED BASKET THREE FOR SOVIETS AT GENEVA) DUBININ TOOK *TANDARD HARD LINE ON BASKET THREE ISSUES.

5. FOR LENINGRAD. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION YOU CAN DEVELOP ON AVAILABILITY OF WESTERN NEWSPAPERS THERE.SOMMERLATTE

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